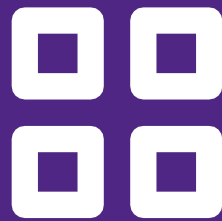


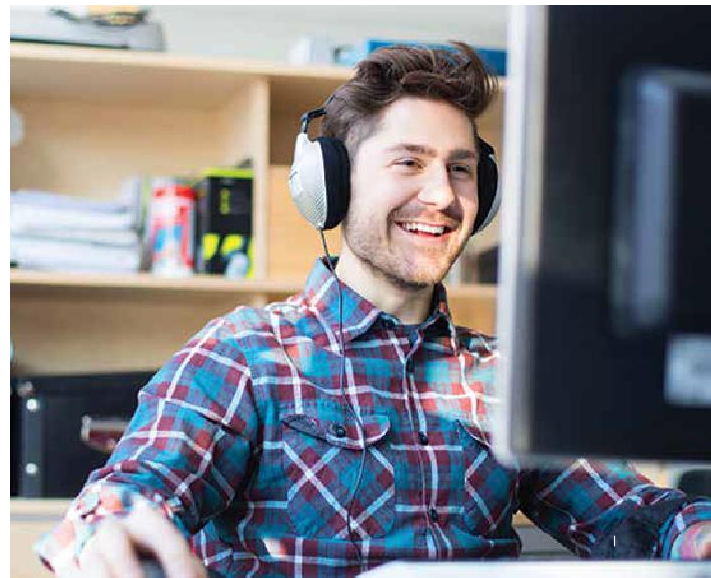
# COMMUNITY PARTNER GUIDE TO COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING



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## WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING?

Western defines Community Engaged Learning (CEL) as students engaging in a project that is developed collaboratively with a community partner, and that has mutually beneficial outcomes. For other forms of Experiential Learning refer to our [website](#).

The purpose of community engagement is to build partnerships whereby college and university knowledge and resources can be shared with the public and private sectors. These partnerships can contribute to (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching):

- enriching scholarship, research, and creative activity
- enhancing curriculum, teaching, and academic learning
- preparing students to serve as educated and engaged citizens
- strengthening democratic values and civic responsibilities
- addressing critical societal issues
- contributing to the public good



## HOW DOES CEL DIFFER FROM OTHER FORMS OF LEARNING?

Community Engaged Learning differs from traditional forms of learning because it brings course content to life by providing students opportunities to apply their course-based knowledge within real-world settings. CEL also endeavors to instill a sense of civic engagement and social responsibility in students. Through their CEL experiences and reflections, students learn “socially responsive knowledge,” affording them the necessary skills to identify and provide solutions for social problems.

Community Engaged Learning is not about the addition of engagement to learning, but rather the integration of engagement with learning. In these settings, the students’ observations and experiences in the community are as integral to the students’ academic learning as class lectures and research (Howard, 1998, p. 21). Through their engagement experiences and reflection, academic learning is informed and transformed, and the academic learning informs and transforms the engagement experience, creating a reciprocal relationship between service and learning (Howard, 1998, p. 21).

Community engaged learning is distinguished from internship or volunteer roles. CEL students differ from both interns and volunteers in that their learning engagement is completed in conjunction with their academic course as a component of their grade, whereas internships are typically stand-alone learning experiences without a substantial class component, and volunteer work is not associated with academic work.



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS ENGAGING IN THE CEL PROGRAM?

Benefits of CEL for community partners:

- Students commitment to the organization and quality of work is increased due to the evaluative component of their service
- Students can bring fresh perspectives, new insight and enthusiasm, and creativity to the agency/organization
- Increased capacity through additional human resources
- Students can work on long-term projects that meet defined needs within the organization
- Increased awareness of your organization as students become familiar with your mission and share the work they are doing with peers and professors in the Western community
- Increase public awareness of key issues and potentially correct misconceptions
- Recruitment of volunteers and employees
- Network with colleagues in other organizations and agencies
- Identify and access other university resources; build relationships with faculty and staff
- Knowledge exchange through active participation in the learning process



## WHAT FORMS CAN CEL TAKE?

<b>PLACEMENT-BASED CEL</b> Students spend between 2-6 hours a week over a course term working on site at the organization fulfilling a specified need(s) determined by the community partner	<b>PROJECT-BASED CEL</b> Students work in groups (approx. 3-10 students) to complete a project and deliver a specific outcome as determined by the community partner
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### **PLACEMENT-BASED CEL**

This type of CEL involves the student going to work within the agency/organization for a set amount of hours, and on a set weekly schedule. The intention of a placement is to have the student fully immersed in the day-to-day functions of an industry/community partner agency. Students can be involved in any kind of work deemed suitable by the agency with the intention that students' involvement directly connects to the course content and learning objectives.

It is also possible for students to take on special, independent projects that meet an agency/organization need(s) during their placement hours. It is our hope that students will become fully oriented within the organization such that they become familiar with the site location and all projects and endeavors undertaken by the organization.

### **PROJECT-BASED CEL**

This type of CEL usually involves students working in groups of approximately 3-10 students to complete a project that fulfills a need for the partnering community organization. This format differs from a placement, as most of the work is completed independently and off-site from the organization. With these partnerships, community supervisors act as a resource to the student(s) and set the scope of the project being undertaken.

Projects should have tangible outcomes for both the student and the organization. It is our hope that students will become acquainted with the organization through a volunteer orientation and site tour, and that they will understand and participate in some of the ongoing projects and endeavors undertaken by the organization.

# WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN STUDENTS DO AT/FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

## PROJECT DELIVERABLES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

<p><b>PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content creation</li> <li>• Program plans/outlines</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> </ul>	<p><b>CREATING POLICY MATERIALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy briefs</li> <li>• Letters to MPs</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESEARCH, ASSESSMENT, AND/OR EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<p><b>DATA ANALYSIS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzing donor behaviours</li> <li>• Tracking communication strategy metrics</li> <li>• Assessing volunteer engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Infographics</li> <li>• Presentation Development</li> <li>• Performance Production</li> </ul>	<p><b>RESEARCH PAPERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature reviews</li> <li>• Executive summaries</li> <li>• Position/response papers</li> <li>• Annotated bibliographies</li> <li>• Case studies</li> </ul>
<p><b>INFORMATION SHARING PRODUCTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital media</li> <li>• Communication plans</li> <li>• Social media content</li> </ul>	<p><b>MARKETING RESOURCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website content</li> <li>• Videos</li> <li>• Social media campaigns</li> <li>• Mobile content</li> </ul>
<p><b>OFFERING SERVICES VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community member interviews</li> <li>• Fundraising</li> <li>• Mentorship</li> <li>• Tutoring</li> </ul>	<p><b>EVENT COORDINATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating event cost strategies</li> <li>• Creating and executing events</li> <li>• Creating an accessibility plan for an annual event</li> <li>• Developing post-event surveys</li> </ul>
<p><b>COVID RECOVERY PROJECTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting with your organization's shift online</li> <li>• Researching and providing a list of online tools               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Films</li> <li>◦ Vodcasts and Podcasts</li> <li>◦ Awareness campaign</li> <li>◦ How-to videos</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>FUNDRAISING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of sponsors</li> <li>• Grant writing</li> <li>• Campaign outreach materials</li> <li>• Marketing materials</li> <li>• Fundraising events</li> </ul>

## FUNDRAISING EFFORTS AS POTENTIAL CEL PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Many of the community partners we work with are nonprofit organizations that operate on small budgets; in some instances, one person is managing multiple roles within the organization. Capacity building is therefore one of the benefits to communities partnering with CEL at Western. Students contributing to a project that is defined by a community organization can help move the organizational goals forward in a given academic year and beyond.

We understand that funding helps build capacity and is a common need of our partners. Students in CEL courses may be tasked with supporting fundraising efforts through projects such as identifying sponsors, writing grants, designing campaign outreach and marketing materials, and organizing and/or executing fundraising events. These project deliverables help support our partners' financial needs, but they do not involve soliciting funds from students, or students soliciting funds from their peers and the wider public. A suitable course project could be researching relevant grants and/or writing a grant application for a specific funding purpose; or identifying and compiling a list of sponsors in a demographic that is aligned with the mission and vision of the organization.

We do not collaborate on projects that involve students soliciting funds, because we limit specific service activities and placements to those with the potential to meet course-relevant academic and civic learning objectives (e.g., collecting donations would offer little to stimulate academic or civic learning in *Psychology of Addictions*, or other such courses, even though this activity could be of service to an organization). Students in CEL courses are completing service activities as a part of their learning and course requirements, and at the same time, they are advancing the goals of the partnering organizations.

Students may choose to donate to an organization they are partnered in a way that is separate from the project they are working on; however, students are not to be soliciting funds or solicited for funds as a part of the course project.

Connect with [cel@uwo.ca](mailto:cel@uwo.ca) for further support on assessing expectations, deliverables, and outcomes for projects.



## HOW MUCH TIME CAN STUDENTS DEDICATE TO YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Placement-based CEL students are typically required to devote a minimum of 2 hours per week for 8-10 weeks during an academic term; however, the number of hours and duration of time spent in the placement varies from course to course. For project-based CEL, each student is expected to dedicate a minimum of 2 hours per week for approximately 8-10 weeks to working on the designated project. Students are not generally expected to be engaged in CEL service hours in the months of December and April, during exam time.

## WHAT EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN PLACED ON STUDENTS BY WESTERN?

Experiential Learning at Western is committed to sending high-quality students to community partner organizations. As such, students are expected to:

- Be punctual and reliable (e.g., meet scheduled deadlines, effective time management)
- Dress appropriately; consult community partner supervisor regarding acceptable attire within the organization
- Participate in all preparatory CEL activities (e.g., understanding relevant theories and risk management, planning project/placement, meeting with supervisors and groupmates, developing goals, visiting sites, and completing online modules)
- Behave and communicate in a professional manner
- Appoint a communication liaison between the student group and community partner (for project-based CEL)
- Employ effective teamwork and problem-solving skills
- Embody the dual role of learner and service provider
- Be prepared for phone, videocall, or face-to-face meetings and service hours
- Respect diversity
- Graciously accept supervision and feedback
- Respect rules of confidentiality when dealing with sensitive or private information
- Actively engage in your service experience
- Be proactive and flexible with your service and educational expectations
- Engage in regular and efficient communication with you
- Produce high-quality work
- Accept the responsibility inherent in community engagement and respectful relationship building

## HOW ARE STUDENTS EVALUATED FOR THEIR WORK WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

The CEL team and course instructors are committed to ensuring that the CEL experience aligns with courses' learning outcomes. Assessment and evaluation measures are specifically designed to integrate course content with students' work and involvement with their industry or community organization. Methods for evaluating students include, but are not limited to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflective essays or papers</li><li>• Reflective journals</li><li>• In-class or online discussions</li><li>• Executive summaries or reports</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual or group presentations</li><li>• e-Portfolio presentations</li><li>• Quizzes</li><li>• Response papers</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Debriefing meetings</li><li>• Project notebooks</li><li>• Final syntheses of learning</li><li>• Research proposals</li><li>• Newspaper articles</li><li>• Posters</li></ul> |
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These assessment and evaluation methods can be tailored to provide an accurate reflection of students' engagement within the community organization, and to demonstrate an understanding of course concepts.

As a partner, it is beneficial to be aware of and understand the overarching learning outcomes for the course, in addition to the CEL objectives and outcomes.

## HOW ARE STUDENT(S) MATCHED WITH PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS?

Typically, the CEL coordinator will share information with each class about engaged community partners, and then subsequent matches will be determined based on students' expressions of interest and learning motivations.

Other methods for matching students with partners include student applications to opportunities or professional "speed dating." It is important to note that the process for matching students (or groups) with community partners is at the discretion of the instructor and/or CEL coordinator and varies depending on the course.

## WILL STUDENTS HAVE A POLICE CHECK?

Police checks are at the discretion of the community partner. When community partners are discussing partnership opportunities with Careers & Experience, they will be asked to identify the type of Police Records Check required by their organization for the work that students will be engaged in. Since students are receiving credit for their engagement within your organization, London Police Services has requested that students seek Police Records Checks for Employment Purposes, and thus, students pay the full fee of \$45.

It is not recommended that organizations put students through their regular volunteer program; however, we ask that organizations provide students with any supporting documentation they would require to get the appropriate record check. Since there is a cost incurred students, we would ask you to carefully consider the work of the students and the necessity for a Police Records Check.



# IS CEL THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

There are many factors that a community partner should consider when deciding whether or not to take on CEL students. Although each organization will have a unique interest and goal for engaging service-learners, the following questions and factors should be considered before determining if CEL is the right fit:

## TIME, ENERGY, AND RESOURCES

- Does the organization understand the time commitment that student supervision may require, including ensuring the supervisor and other staff have made appropriate plans to accommodate students' needs?
- Does the organization have a staff member that can commit to serve as the students' supervisor and mentor?
  - Does that staff member have the time, energy, and enthusiasm to serve such a role, to provide consistent feedback, and to commit to evaluating students' involvement and project/deliverable?
- Does the organization have the resources necessary for the successful completion of the desired project/deliverable?
- If the project or placement involves students working on-site, can the space accommodate them?

## PREPARATION FOR STUDENTS

- Pre-planning is necessary for successful CEL involvement
- Meetings with CEL coordinators and faculty members are needed to detail the scope of students' involvement and potential projects
- Preparation of "welcome package" that can orient students to your organization, its missions and values
- Tasks, activities, policies, and procedures should be clearly outlined and agreed upon before students begin their project/placement
- Staff at the organization should be informed about the students' involvement

## CEL PROJECT/DELIVERABLE

- Ensure the necessary resources and supports are available for the project/placement to be completed
- Determine the feasibility of the project/placement considering the timeframe and number of hours students are able to commit

*topic continued on page 13*

## OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Partnering organizations may be asked to give a presentation to the respective class they are collaborating with to inform student(s) about their organization and the particular tasks and project(s) they intend to have student(s) involved with
- Providing feedback to faculty and/or the CEL coordinator regarding the experience/involvement
- Clarify roles and understand responsibilities of the CEL coordinator, faculty member, students, and designated supervisor from partnering organization

After carefully evaluating these factors, decide whether or not CEL is right for your needs and your organization. If it is, please contact the Community Engaged Learning team at [cel@uwo.ca](mailto:cel@uwo.ca) or Careers & Experience (519.661.3559) to learn how to form a partnership or to discuss other experiential learning opportunities offered at Western University.

## WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED SUPERVISOR?

A Partnership Agreement signed between the community organization and the CEL team at Western will outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties. They include but are not limited to:

- Meeting with the students at an agreed upon time at a designated space within your organization during the first week of partnership to provide:
  - A tour of your organization (if applicable)
  - A brief history of your organization
  - A safety orientation highlighting any regulated safety requirements as well as any site-specific safety items that participants should be aware of
  - Any additional training or orientation requirements that would enable students to effectively complete their assigned project(s) or task(s)
- Have and maintain active liability insurance for the duration of the placement
- If your organization does not have liability insurance, this must be disclosed to Western prior to signing this agreement
- Complete Community Partner and Student Expectations Agreement (where applicable) with the student(s) to ensure that mutual expectations in terms of project scope, communications plans, and the intended deliverables of the partnership between the organization and the students are clear at the beginning of the placement or project
- Provide necessary guidance and resources to students who partner with your organization as they complete assigned projects or tasks (e.g., answer student questions, assist with troubleshooting, provide feedback and suggestions)
- Communicate any concerns about Western Student(s)', conduct, performance, safety, and project progression with the designated Western faculty/staff contact immediately
- Communicate any incidents (workplace accident, medical emergency, etc.) that occur during the placement with the designated Western faculty/staff contact immediately

## TIPS FOR MANAGING STUDENTS DOING AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT OR PLACEMENT

- Hold an initial meeting with the student(s) in your organization if possible. During this meeting, please provide the students with a background of your organization and the work you do as well as discuss any expectations that you would have of the student. This would be a good time to review the *Student and Community Partner Expectations Agreement* with the students to ensure everyone is on the same page, understands the work they are to complete, and the deadlines by which it should be achieved.
- Regular communication is key. It is our hope that both the community partner and student keep open lines of communication, and that any problems, concerns or questions are addressed appropriately.
- Be aware of the learning outcomes of the course and take time to discuss with the student(s) how the work they are doing with your organization is linked to the learning outcomes.
- Recognize that while the student has dedicated his/her time to your organization, the Experiential Learning course represents just one course out of a regular 5-course workload. Please discuss expectations with the students and adjust placement hours and project scope accordingly.
- Share your experience! Students appreciate the opportunity to hear about the professional paths of their community partner supervisors. Share your educational background, why you chose your specific career, and the steps you took to get where you are.
- If any concerns arise about student conduct or performance, please contact your respective CEL Coordinator to discuss these concerns. The CEL Team will work with the faculty member and the student to resolve any concerns.



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